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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PRETORIA 000482

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR AF/S S. HILL
NSC FOR AF DIRECTOR B. LEO
DEPT PASS TO USAID E. LOKEN

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [SF](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE ELECTIONS: SOUTH AFRICA TO SEND 50
OBSERVERS AS PART OF SADC DELEGATION

REF: A. STATE 018257

[B](#). PRETORIA 0454
[C](#). PRETORIA 0375

PRETORIA 00000482 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Donald Teitelbaum. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) SUMMARY. South Africa will deploy approximately 50 election observers to Zimbabwe as part of the SADC delegation. Angola, as chair of the SADC Troika, will lead the SADC delegation, which the South African Government hopes will include at least 100 regional observers. Ambassador Kingsley Mamabolo will serve as the senior South African member on the delegation. The South African Government is aware of the decision to deny SADC-PF separate accreditation (ref B), but said merely that it was the prerogative of the Government of Zimbabwe to accredit observers. The Pan-African Parliament will separately send approximately 20 observers to Zimbabwe, led by Swazi MP Marwick Khumalo. Several South African civil society groups, who were either denied accreditation or never bothered trying, will send "informal observers." END SUMMARY.

South Africa to Participate in SADC Delegation

[2](#). (SBU) Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Deputy Director for Southern Africa Gabriel Setlhoke and Assistant Director Eden Reid told PolOff March 7 that South Africa plans to deploy approximately 50 observers to Zimbabwe for the March 29 elections as part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) delegation. South Africa will not/not deploy a separate bilateral South African Government (SAG) delegation, as they did for the 2005 parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe. An advance South African team will arrive in Harare March 9 or 10, with the bulk of the delegation deploying on March 20. The South African delegation will include government officials, civil society, and Members of Parliament. SAG Great Lakes Envoy Kingsley Mamabolo told PolCounselor and PolOff March 6 that he will lead the South African component of the SADC delegation. No South African ministers or deputy ministers will participate in the mission.

13. (C) Angola, as chair of the SADC Troika on Politics, Defence and Security, will lead the SADC election observation mission, according to Reid. He expects that an Angolan minister, yet to be determined, will serve as delegation head. South Africa hopes that the SADC delegation will include more than 100 observers, although the total number will depend on the willingness, capacity and resources of the SADC countries. SADC expects to launch the election observation mission March 9 or 10 in Harare, although both Reid and Mamabolo acknowledged that the SADC planning has been "chaotic."

14. (SBU) Reid underscored that the SADC delegation will deploy throughout the country, and will meet with the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, the Registrar-General, the political parties, and civil society organizations. Reid, who served at the South African Embassy in Zimbabwe, said that the South African observers will be fully briefed on the "challenges" around registration, delimitation, and media restrictions, and will take those issues into account during their observations.

15. (C) Speaking personally, Reid (protect) said he expects President Mugabe to win. Simba Makoni, if he is "very QPresident Mugabe to win. Simba Makoni, if he is "very lucky," could make it to a second round. In Reid's view, Makoni's presidential bid was "premature." He should have waited until the 2009 ZANU-PF Congress, where he likely would have been elected party head. Instead, Makoni is now out of ZANU-PF forever, Reid argued, noting that the party is not forgiving of "traitors."

GOZ Prerogative to Exclude SADC-PF

16. (C) The SAG was aware of the Government of Zimbabwe's (GOZ) refusal to accredit the SADC-Parliamentary Forum

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(SADC-PF) for the elections. Reid said it is the prerogative of the GOZ to invite observers, and not the place of South Africa to second-guess their internal decisions. He noted that SADC's role in the elections will be "significant" since it will be one of the only large international election observation missions in the country.

ANC Delegation?

17. (C) To date, Post has been unable to confirm whether the ANC will send a separate delegation to Zimbabwe, as they did in 2005. Neither DFA nor the Electoral Institute for Southern Africa (EISA) were aware of ANC plans. (COMMENT: Elements of the new ANC leadership, particularly COSATU and the South African Communist Party (SACP), have been critical of Mugabe. If an ANC delegation includes COSATU or SACP members, the ANC delegation might provide a more honest and independent assessment of the electoral process. END COMMENT.)

Pan-African Parliament

18. (C) The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) plans to deploy approximately 20 observers o/a March 22, including both PAP Members of Parliament and secretariat staff. PAP Member Marwick Khumalo from Swaziland will serve as head of the PAP delegation, according to Khalid Dahab, Senior Information, Communications & Media Relations Officer. Dahab, a Sudanese national, will be part of the delegation. Dahab told PolOff March 6 that the situation in Zimbabwe is "very sad," expressing his personal hope that the elections in Zimbabwe would lead to positive change.

Civil Society

¶9. (C) South African civil society organizations that plan to send observers to Zimbabwe include:

-- Electoral Institute for Southern Africa (EISA): EISA has formally requested accreditation from the GOZ, but expects to be denied permission, as they were in 2005. In that event, they plan to "embed" several of their Zimbabwean staff in the domestic Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) observation teams. EISA Senior Researcher Bertha Chiroro told PolOff March 06 that her contacts told her President Mugabe himself made the decisions on observer accreditation. EISA has also been asked to deploy one of their staff as part of the African Union delegation. Chiroro reported that EISA offered to provide assistance and even funds to the Zimbabwe Election Commission to assist with the elections, but the head of the Commission refused.

-- Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA): IDASA plans to send approximately 15 members of their staff to Zimbabwe, including institute head Paul Graham and analyst Sydney Masamvu, as "informal observers" (ref C). The Government of Norway is funding their mission.

-- Anglican Church: The South African Anglican Church is sending approximately 10-15 "informal observers," and will interact with their counterparts in Zimbabwe (ref C).

-- Institute for a Democratic Alternative for Zimbabwe (IDAZIM): A new think tank based in Midrand, IDAZIM will likely receive funding from the Embassy of Germany to send 15-20 informal observers for the election. IDAZIM is focusing its research and programs on transitional democracy, economics, justice, and leadership. Its board members include prominent South Africans Fredrick van Zyl Slabbert and Alex Boraine, as well as Zimbabwean civil society activists Deprose Muchena, Arnold Tsunga, Tawanda Mutasah, Berita Kopolo, Nontokozo Mema, and IDAZIM Director David Malungisa.

Comment

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¶10. (C) We doubt that the South Africans on the election observation delegation will be willing to criticize the obvious flaws in the Zimbabwe election. Based on our conversations with SAG officials and others, we would speculate that the SADC would be inclined to use language similar to its 2005 statement on the elections, calling them "credible, well managed and transparent." That said, we are somewhat encouraged by the involvement of Ambassador Mamabolo, who lived in Zimbabwe in exile in the 1980s, and understands well the impact of Mugabe's misrule. Mamabolo is reasonable and accessible, and may be willing to push for some nuance in the SADC statement. We would also recommend that the MDC, ZESN, and other civil society organizations engage the SADC delegation early and often. In 2005, we heard several reports from the South African observers who charged that the MDC complained about the election, but never provided them with concrete evidence.
TEITELBAUM